

Message Text

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ACTION EUR-12

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 MCT-01 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-05 H-01
INR-10 L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 SP-02 SS-15
USIA-06 SY-05 /067 W
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R 181002Z MAR 78
FM AMEMBASSY BONN
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 6880
INFO AMEMBASSY BERLIN
AMEMBASSY BRUSSELS
AMEMBASSY LONDON
AMEMBASSY PARIS
AMEMBASSY ROME
AMEMBASSY VIENNA
USMISSION USNATO
USMISSION USBERLIN
AMCONSUL BREMEN
AMCONSUL DUSSELDORF
AMCONSUL FRANKFURT
AMCONSUL HAMBURG
AMCONSUL MUNICH
AMCONSUL STUTTGART

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 02 BONN 04966

BRUSSELS FOR USEEC

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: PINT, GW
SUBJECT: COULD SCHLEYER HAVE BEEN SAVED? REMORSE AND
RECRIMINATION

REF: (A) DUSSELDORF 440, (B) BONN 3031

SUMMARY. RECENT REVELATIONS OF KEY INFORMATION THAT
WAS NOT ACTED ON BY THE POLICE PRESENTS A CHILLING
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QUESTION OF WHETHER HANNS-MARTIN SCHLEYER, KIDNAPPED
BY TERRORISTS SEPTEMBER 5 AND MURDERED OCTOBER 18 OR 19,
MIGHT HAVE BEEN SAVED HAD THE INFORMATION BEEN HANDLED
EFFICIENTLY. APART FROM PROVOKING A FEELING OF DEEP
REMORSE IN BOTH GOVERNMENT AND OPPOSITION CIRCLES,
THESE REVELATIONS ARE BEING USED BY THE OPPOSITION TO
CRITICIZE THE FEDERAL INTERIOR MINISTER AND/OR HELMUT

SCHMIDT AND TO DEMAND THE RESIGNATION OF THE INTERIOR MINISTER OF THE STATE IN WHICH SCHLEYER WAS KIDNAPPED AND HELD CAPTIVE. CHARGES OF SPECIFIC RESPONSIBILITY ARE WEAK, AND WE DOUBT THAT THESE RESIGNATIONS WILL OCCUR. BUT THE NEW REVELATIONS HAVE PUT THE SCHLEYER CASE BACK ON THE FRONT PAGES. THESE DEVELOPMENTS, ALONG WITH THE SCHMIDT COALITION'S RECENT DIFFICULTIES IN PASSING ANTI-TERRORIST LAWS, HAVE MADE TERRORISM AN ISSUE ON WHICH THE GOVERNMENT IS AGAIN ON THE DEFENSIVE, IN CONTRAST TO SCHMIDT'S EARLIER AURA OF THE "HERO OF MOGADISCIO." THE POTENTIAL FOR FURTHER POLITICAL DAMAGE EXISTS IF AND WHEN ANOTHER TERRORIST ACT OCCURS IN THE FRG AND INFLAMES EMOTIONS. END SUMMARY

1. A SERIES OF REVELATIONS OF POLICE MISHANDLING OF CRITICAL INFORMATION IN THE SCHLEYER CASE HAS UNFOLDED DURING MARCH. EMPLOYEES OF THE HIGH-RISE BUILDING NEAR COLOGNE TO WHICH SCHLEYER WAS BROUGHT SEPTEMBER 5 ALERTED THE POLICE TWO DAYS LATER OF THEIR SUSPICIONS THAT THE TERRORISTS MIGHT BE USING A PARTICULAR APARTMENT IN THE BUILDING. THIS SUSPICION WAS BASED ON PECULIAR BEHAVIOR BY THOSE RENTING THE APARTMENT IN QUESTION AND ON THE FACT OF CONSTANTLY LOWERED SHADES IN THAT APARTMENT. THE TIP WAS DULY TAKEN TO A HIGHER HEADQUARTER, WHICH THEN SENT IT TO ANOTHER HEADQUARTERS IN COLOGNE, WHICH CONVEYED IT THROUGH A FURTHER LAYER

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TO THE FEDERAL CRIMINAL OFFICE (BKA). THE INFORMATION THEN LANGUISHED OR GOT LOST. HAD THE DETAILS BEEN PROCESSED, INCLUDING BY A COMPUTER AVAILABLE FOR THE PURPOSE, THE FACT THAT A MISSING PASSPORT HAD BEEN USED IN RENTING THE APARTMENT WOULD HAVE ATTRACTED IMMEDIATE ATTENTION.

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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 02 OF 02 BONN 04966

2. ACCORDING TO PRESS ACCOUNTS, A SECOND TIP CAME
OCTOBER 11 FROM THE WIFE OF A LOCAL POLICEMAN LIVING IN
THE NEIGHBORHOOD OF THE HOUSE WHERE SCHLEYER HAD BEEN
HELD CAPTIVE. A FEW DAYS EARLIER, HAVING STUDIED
PICTURES OF LEADING TERRORISTS WHICH HAD JUST BEEN
PUBLISHED IN CONJUNCTION WITH THE SCHLEYER CASE, SHE
CLAIMED SHE HAD SEEN ONE (WILLY PETER STOLL) ENTERING
THE HIGHRISE IN QUESTION. THIS INFORMATION ALSO LAN-
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GUISHED UNTIL THE LADY'S HUSBAND USED HIS POLICE
CONNECTIONS TO INSIST THAT THE TIP BE CONVEYED UP THE
BUREAUCRATIC LADDER.

3. THREE MORE REPORTS OF THEIR SUSPICIONS BY THE
MANAGEMENT OF THE BUILDING IN WHICH SCHLEYER HAD BEEN
HELD WERE MADE TO THE POLICE BEFORE IT REGISTERED THAT
THE BUILDING WAS A PRIME TARGET FOR INVESTIGATION. BY
THEN IT WAS MID-NOVEMBER, AND SCHLEYER WAS DEAD. POLICE
PLACED THE APARTMENT UNDER OBSERVATION BUT A COMBINA-
TION OF DIFFIDENCE IN FORCING THE APARTMENT'S SPECIAL
LOCK AND THE HOPE OF FINDING SOME TERRORISTS ON A
RETURN TRIP DELAYED A THOROUGH SEARCH UNTIL EARLY

FEBRUARY 1978. AT THAT POINT, A CUFFLINK STONE OF SCHLEYER'S WAS FOUND AND THE SIGNIFICANCE OF WHAT HAD OCCURRED BEGAN TO SPREAD WITHIN THE GOVERNMENT AND EVENTUALLY TO THE PRESS.

4. AT PRESENT, THE POSSIBILITY (BUT NOT NECESSARILY LIKELIHOOD) THAT SCHLEYER MIGHT HAVE BEEN SAVED IS GENERALLY ACKNOWLEDGED. IT APPEARS HE WAS HELD IN THE HIGHRISE UNTIL AT LEAST SEPTEMBER 13 AND POSSIBLY LATER, AND IT APPEARS THAT TERRORISTS FREQUENTED THE BUILDING FOR SOME TIME AFTER THAT.

5. OVER THE LAST TWO WEEKS, OPPOSITION LEADERS HAVE DEMANDED THE RESIGNATION, VARIOUSLY, OF FEDERAL INTERIOR MINISTER MAIHOFFER AND STATE INTERIOR MINISTER HIRSCH OF NORTH-RHINE-WESTPHALIA, WHERE THE KIDNAPPING AND HIGHRISE CAPTIVITY OCCURRED. BOTH ARE MEMBERS OF THE FREE DEMOCRATIC PARTY (FDP), WHICH IS IN COALITION WITH THE SOCIAL DEMOCRATS (SPD) IN THE LAND AS WELL AS FEDERAL GOVERNMENT. THE CHARGE HAS BEEN ONE OF CONFIDENTIAL

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GENERAL "POLITICAL RESPONSIBILITY," AN ALL-PURPOSE RUBRIC THAT COVERS SINS OF OMISSION AS WELL AS COMMISSION AND WHICH WAS MOST RECENTLY APPLIED TO DEFENSE MINISTER LEBER.

6. A FOUR-HOUR BUNDESTAG DEBATE MARCH 16 ON THE MATTER PRODUCED LITTLE NEW INFORMATION BUT CRYSTALIZED PARTISAN POSITIONS. DREGGER, POINT MAN FOR THE OPPOSITION ON THE ISSUE, CHARGED SCHMIDT AS WELL AS THE MINISTERS WITH RESPONSIBILITY. HE BITINGLY NOTED THAT SCHMIDT HAD BEEN HAPPY TO TAKE RESPONSIBILITY FOR THE MOGADISCIO RESCUE AND SHOULD DO SO IN THIS CASE AS WELL. SCHMIDT AND THE TWO INTERIOR MINISTERS CONCERNED VOICED GRIEF OVER THE MISMANAGEMENT BUT PARRIED CHARGES OF THEIR OWN CULPABILITY.

7. AT THE SAME TIME, THE GOVERNMENT PROPOSED AN INVESTIGATIVE COMMISSION TO EXAMINE THE CASE AND DRAW LESSONS FOR THE FUTURE. IN A SHREWD POLITICAL MOVE, THE GOVERNMENT HAS NAMED A VETERAN CHRISTIAN-SOCIALIST (CSU) FIGURE, HERMAN HOECHERL, TO CHAIR THIS COMMISSION. HOECHERL, A FORMER INTERIOR AND AGRICULTURE MINISTER IN THE 1960'S, IS A MAN OF RIGHTIST POLITICAL ORIENTATION WHO ENJOYS POPULARITY AND AN IMPECCABLE PERSONAL REPUTATION WITH ALL PARTS OF THE POLITICAL SPECTRUM. THERE THE MATTER RESTS AT PRESENT.

8. COMMENT: WE DOUBT THAT EITHER THE FEDERAL OR STATE

INTERIOR MINISTERS, NOT TO SPEAK OF SCHMIDT, WILL BE BROUGHT TO RESIGN AS A RESULT OF THIS AFFAIR. AMONG OTHER FACTORS, THERE SEEMS TOO MUCH OF AN AURA OF POLICE CONFUSION RATHER THAN LACK OF EFFORT BY THE MINISTERS. NONETHELESS, THIS IS A SERIOUS CASE, ADDING ANOTHER DIMENSION OF THE TERRORIST PROBLEM (ON TOP OF THE GOVERNMENT'S RECENT TROUBLES WITH THE SPD LEFT IN PASSING ANTI-TERRORIST LEGISLATION) AS A CONFIDENTIAL

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POLITICAL LIABILITY FOR THE COALITION. ONE EFFECT IS TO UNDO COMPLETELY SCHMIDT'S ALREADY DATED AURA AS THE "HERO OF MOGADISCIO." ANOTHER IS TO HEIGHTEN THE VOLATILITY OF TERRORISM AS A PARTISAN POLITICAL ISSUE IF AND WHEN THE NEXT FRG TERRORIST EPISODE TAKES PLACE. MEEHAN

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